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REMARKS BY THE EDITORS

(Regarding the Illustrations on pages 428 and 429)

WE agree with Mr. Cox that it is childish to constantly attack the National Academy of Design by calling it "academic," using that word as a term of opprobrium. Because the Academy of Design is the best institution of the kind our people have so far been able to develop.

Its teachings and principles are the same as have been taught by all the greatest artists of the past since Pheidias glorified the Parthenon. And if more great men do not issue from its students' school it is because many great men in America do not go into art—they go into making gas-pipes, shoes, oil, sugar, pulp, coke, steel, coal and other noble pursuits.

The Academy art schools are necessary. Great men even need them. Moreover, the Academy is essential to keep alive the atmosphere of art—until the time when this nation will develop enough mothers able to give birth to boys with enough imagination to wish to become great men, above all great artists. Then the Academy will turn out great artists in abundance. Not before: because great men are born, not made.

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Mr. Cox is correct—"The Captive Andromaché" by Sir Frederick Leighton (see page 428) is an academic picture, but it is nevertheless a great work of art—a great story, of noble conception, of exceeding beauty of composition, superb in color, fine in drawing, and pleasing in technique, and profoundly expressive of the story. Is there any one in the world today who can do any better? We doubt it. Not a single modernistic painter from Manet down was, or is, fit to tie the shoe-laces of Leighton, and this picture, compared with the best the whole band of modernists have produced, is like Hyperion to a Satyr.

Before railing at the "academic" let them first of all climb up where they can even comprehend the beauty of this work before they hurl their silly epithet "academic" at this picture—in a derogatory sense.

Compared with this splendid composition the "Dead Christ" by Manet (see page 429) is the silliest clap-trap. This absurd creation is now in the Metropolitan Museum here and can be studied there at one's leisure. It is so far below the academic

standard realized by Leighton's fine work that it is absurd to mention them even in the same breath.

Note the childish conception of the dead Christ seated in a chair with both hands extended as if begging for ten cents; note the muddy color—except the wings of the angel which have a charming blue; note the clumsy, inexpressive drawing of the body of Christ, especially the legs, feet and hands; observe the utter absence of any meaning and expression of any rational idea, the whole thrown together for the sake of parading a puerile system of an "interesting painting" which, while it may be "personal," is not beautiful. It is stupid beyond measure and so far below the standard of the academic that it is truly, as Mr. Cox says—"Infra-academic."

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As for the "Grafter" by Millet (see page 429) Mr. Cox is again correct—it is "Supra-academic" because as artistry and craftsmanship it is above the academic standard. But to bring this home to the uninitiated public will be difficult. For while the work does not express so dramatic a story and is not so beautiful in composition as Leighton's work, either as to line or color, yet there is an intensity of expression of life in this group that is astonishing. We can only seize that by looking at the picture itself and for a long time. It belongs to Mr. Wm. Rockefeller, of this city, and, his house being closed for the summer, we could not obtain a photograph of it in order to offer a better reproduction than the one we give.

But a long contemplation of this small engraving will make one feel the monumental character of the composition of the two figures. The wonderfully true and expressive drawing—so that the figures gradually seem to move; the profound expression of the absorption of the whole family in the process of grafting that tree; the fine color of the original picture and the effective yet unobtrusive but still rare personal technique or manner of painting, makes this a poetic picture of simple peasant life that grips one more and more the longer one studies it.

The subject is not a heroic one like Leighton's, it is even trivial. But Millet has handled it with such consummate artistry that, where others have trivialized a noble subject, he has lifted his ordinary subject to a noble work of art.

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